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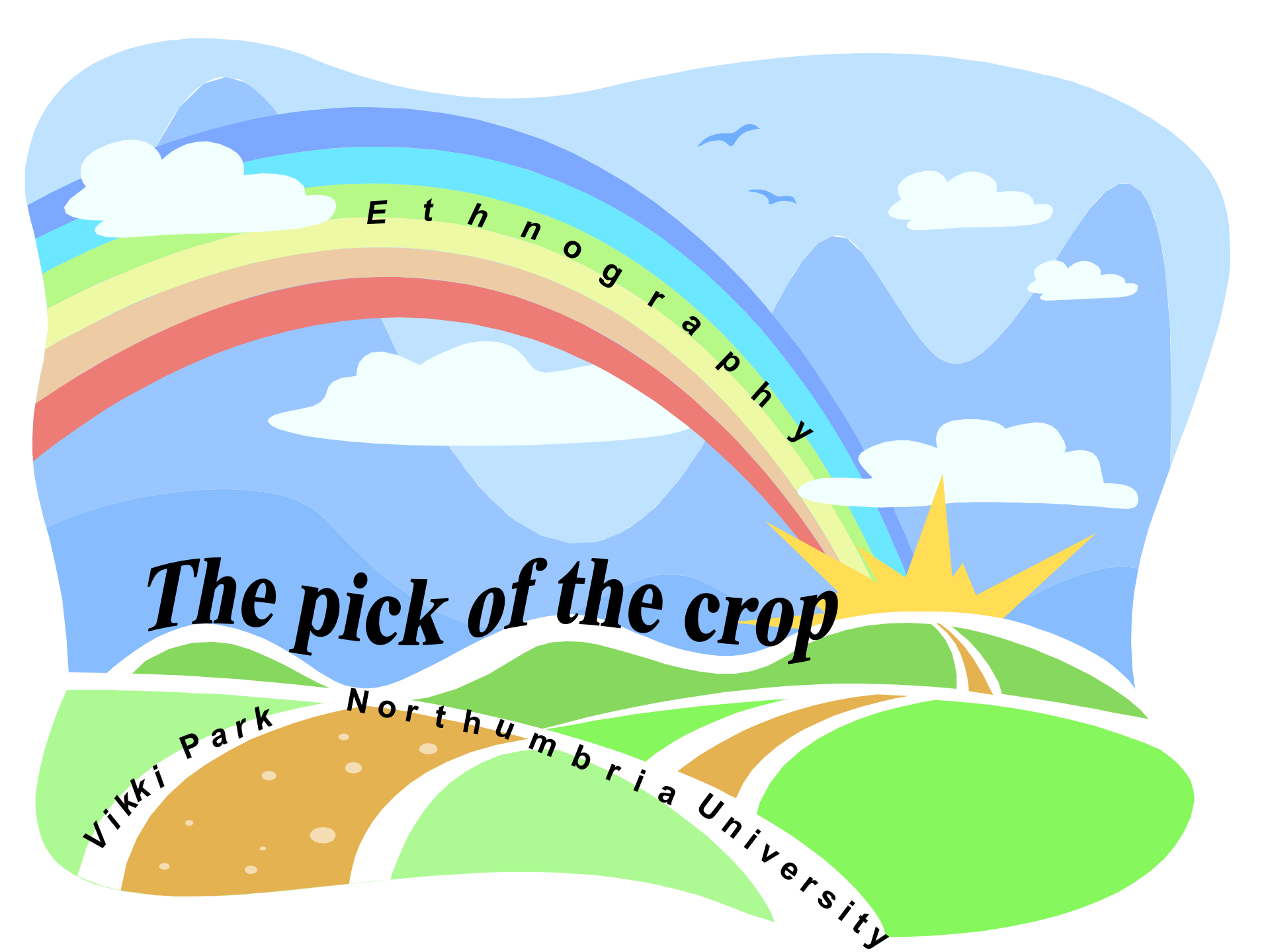
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E t h n o g r a p h y

***The pick of the crop***

Vikki Park

Northumbria University

# **Abstract for the session**

Ethnography as a research approach has evolved over time.

It has developed from its historical roots within the field of anthropology and is now used widely in a range of different contexts.

This first session of the Teesside Qualitative Researcher's Forum will begin by considering the vast number of approaches which can now be used within ethnography. The session will then focus more specifically upon a few common approaches adopted in research, such as focused and critical ethnography, among others.

# Choosing a methodology



**Definitions which agree  
with each other 😊**



## ***Ethnography is...***

observation

culture

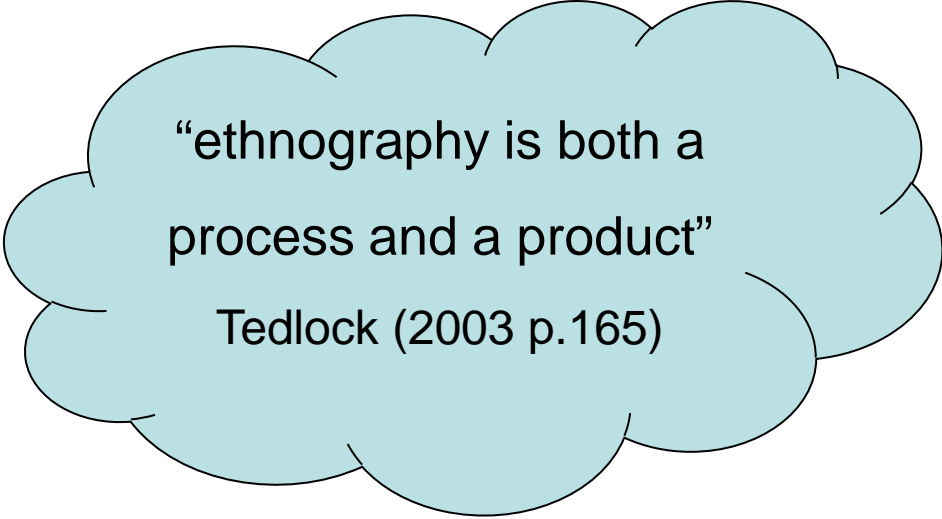
‘going native’

“A research **method** in which the researcher immerses him- or herself in a social setting for an extended period of time, observing behaviour, listening to what is said ... and asking questions.”

*Bryman (2012)*

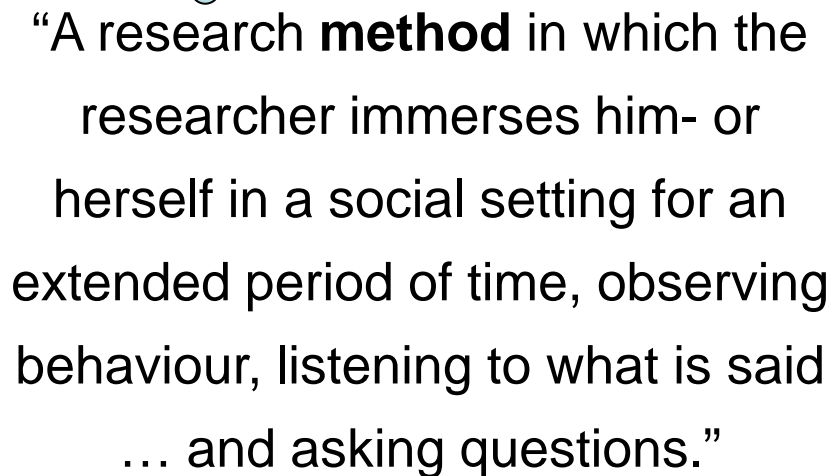
“Observation and participation ... remain the characteristic features of the ethnographic approach”

*Atkinson et al. (2001)*



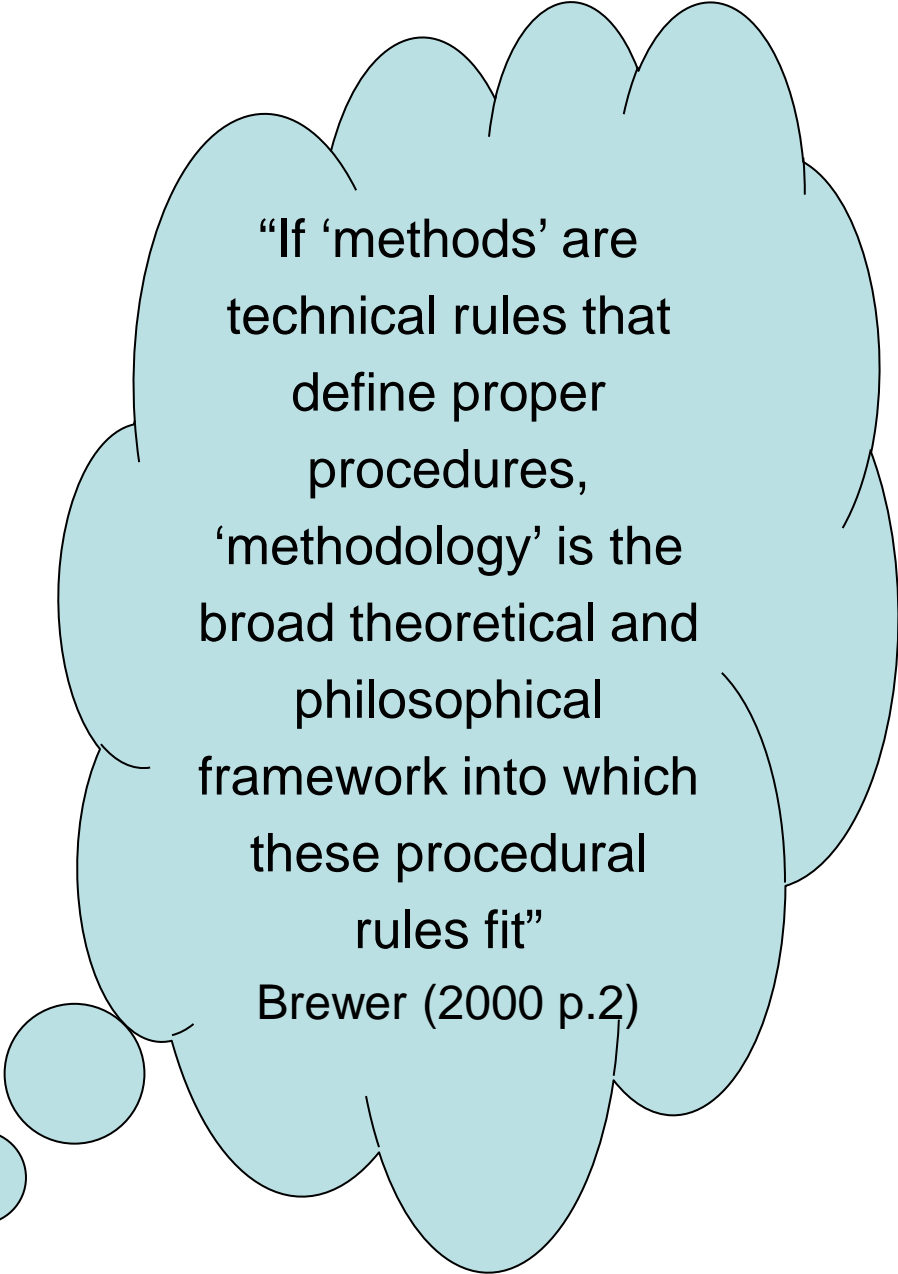
“ethnography is both a  
process and a product”

Tedlock (2003 p.165)



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researcher immerses him- or  
herself in a social setting for an  
extended period of time, observing  
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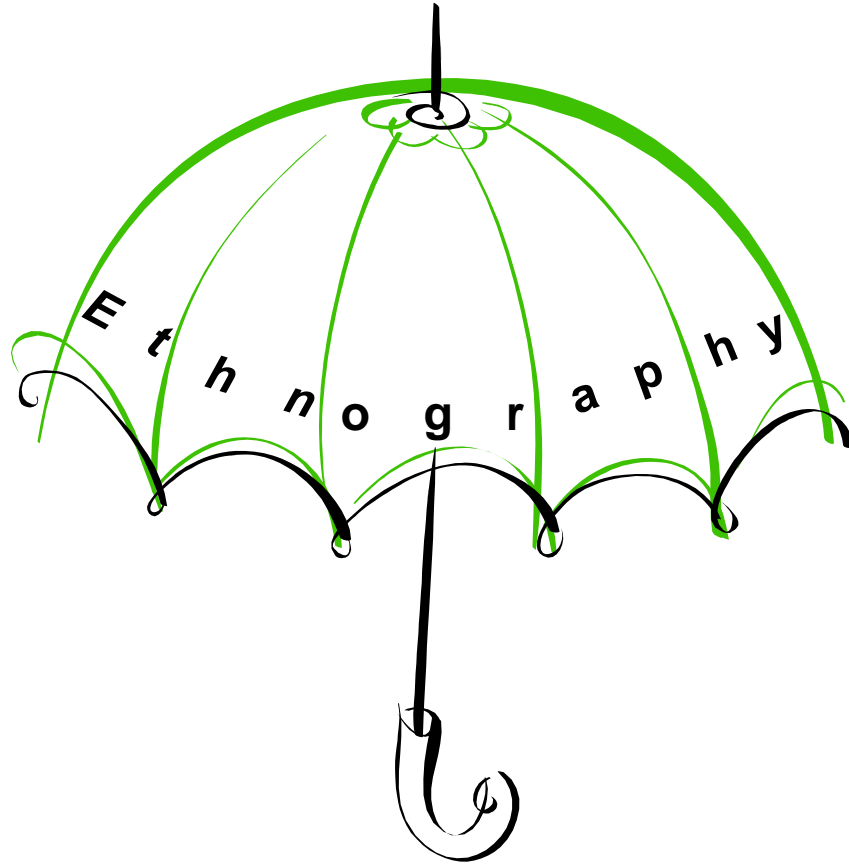
*Bryman (2012)*



“If ‘methods’ are  
technical rules that  
define proper  
procedures,  
‘methodology’ is the  
broad theoretical and  
philosophical  
framework into which  
these procedural  
rules fit”

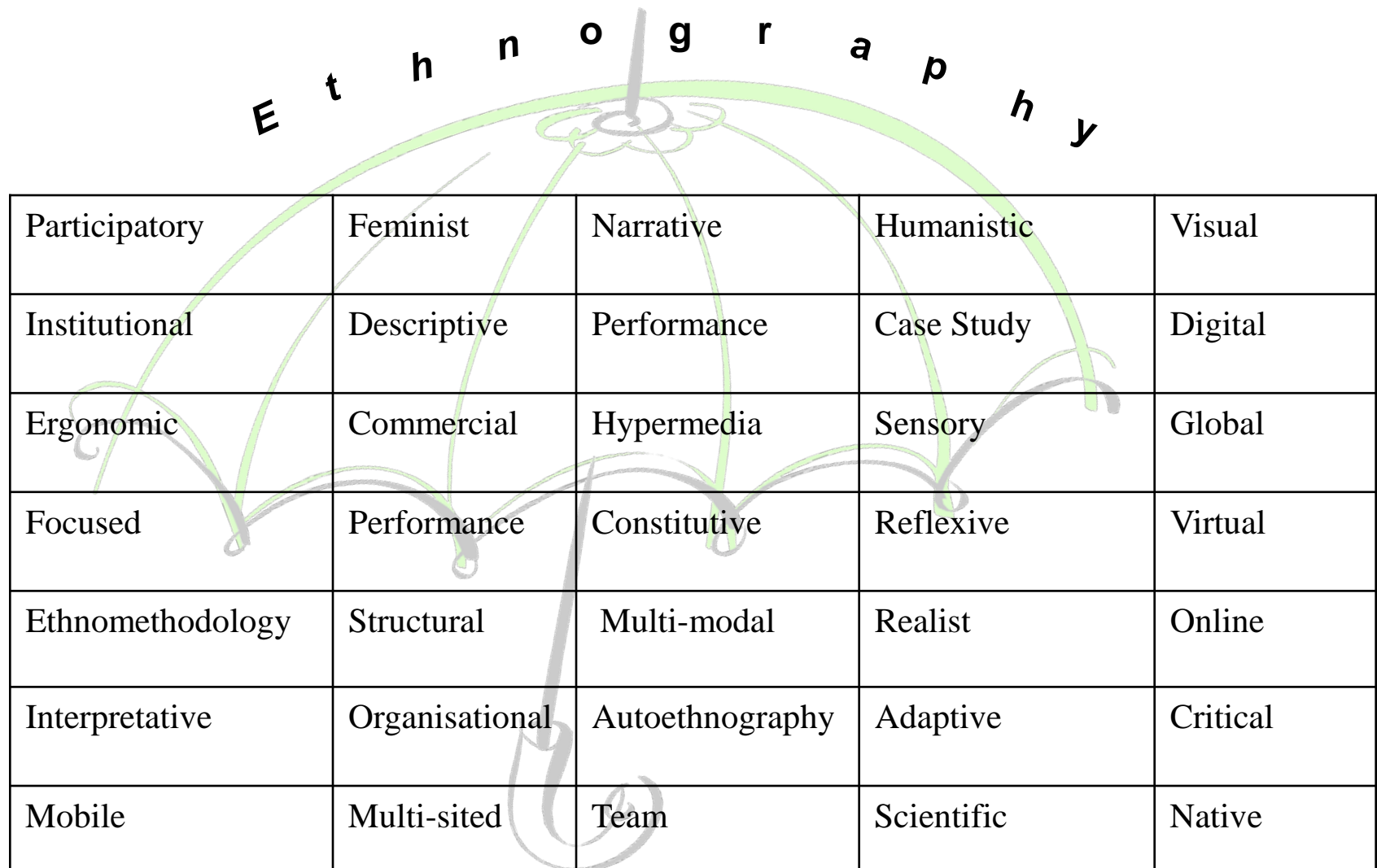
Brewer (2000 p.2)

As it transpires ethnography is not as linear in approach as it would appear. It seemed to me to be more of an umbrella term which covers a wide range of approaches.



“Ethnography is not one particular method of data collection but a **style** of research that is distinguished by its objectives, which are to understand the social meanings and activities of people in a given ‘field’ or setting, and an approach, which involves close association with, and often participation in, this setting.” (Brewer, 2000 p.189)

By engaging with the literature I found over 30 different 'types' of ethnography





# How to choose the type?

- Back to the starting point of the research



# Process of elimination

## **Narrative =**

- Narrative enquiry
- Stories

## **Institutional =**

Explore social relations that structure every day lives. Maps translocal relations that coordinate peoples activities in particular local sites.

## **Team =**

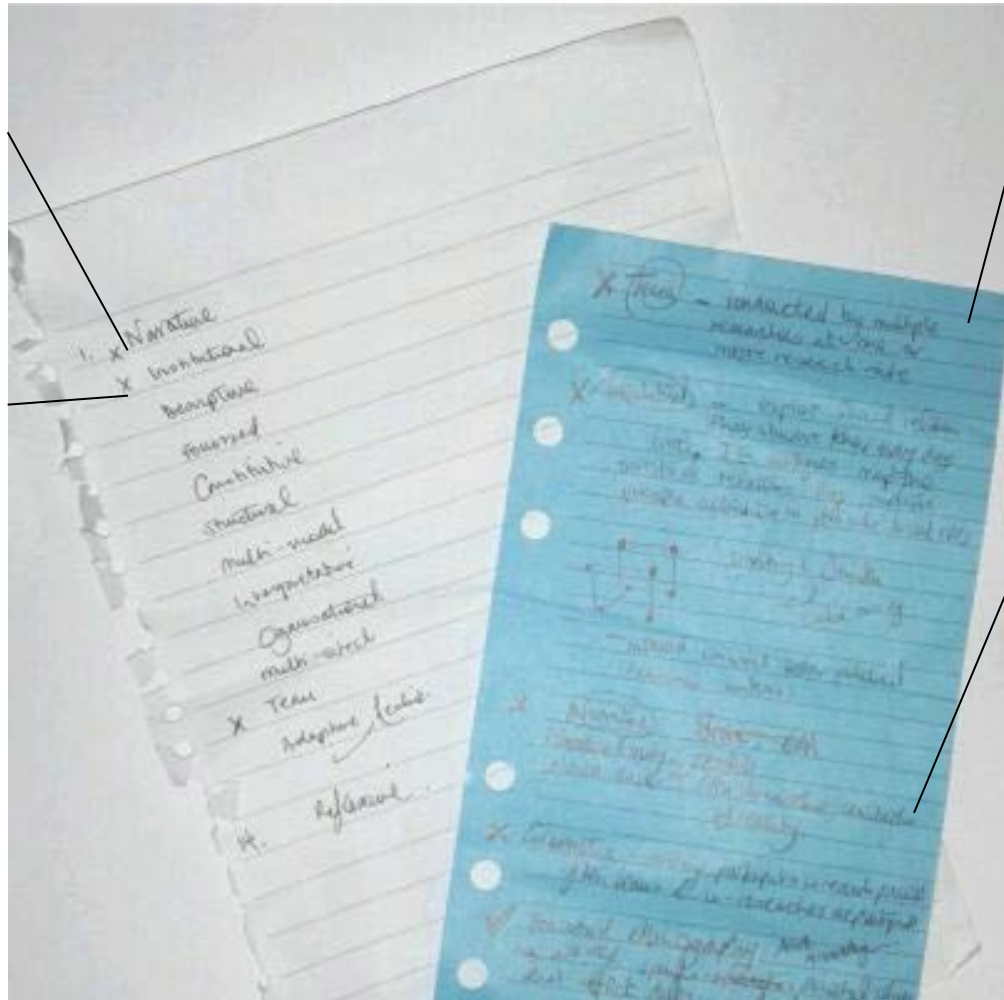
Conducted by *multiple* researchers at one or more research sites

## **Collaborative =** *Involving*

*participants* in the research process. Participants are often in teams & are co-researchers.

## **Focused ethnography = (AKA Micro-ethnography)**

- Understanding specific societal issues that affect different facets of practice.
- Enables researchers to understand the interrelationship between people and their environments.



# **Focused ethnography**

My research choice will use focused ethnography, also known as micro-ethnography, to focus particularly upon one distinct issue within a culture (IPL) in specific settings (Adult Critical Care).

“Focused ethnography has emerged as a promising method for applying ethnography to a distinct issue or shared experience in cultures or sub-cultures and in specific settings, rather than throughout entire communities.” p.36

“Focused ethnography has emerged as a useful tool in gaining a better understanding of the experiences of specific aspects of people’s ways of life and being.” p.38

Cruz and Higginbottom (2013)

# Focused Ethnography Examples



The role of nursing  
unit culture in shaping  
utilization behaviors

**Scott and Pollock  
(2008)**



The inner door:  
toward an  
understanding of  
suicidal patients

**Tzeng et al. 2010**



The significance of  
social engagement in  
relocated older adults

**Dupuis-Blanchard et  
al. (2009)**

# **My focused ethnography**

An ethnographic study of the Inter-Professional  
Learning culture of NHS staff within the adult  
critical care clinical setting.



**IPL in Adult Critical Care**

# Critical Ethnography

“Critical ethnography draws on cultural studies, neo-Marxist and feminist theories and research on critical pedagogies.

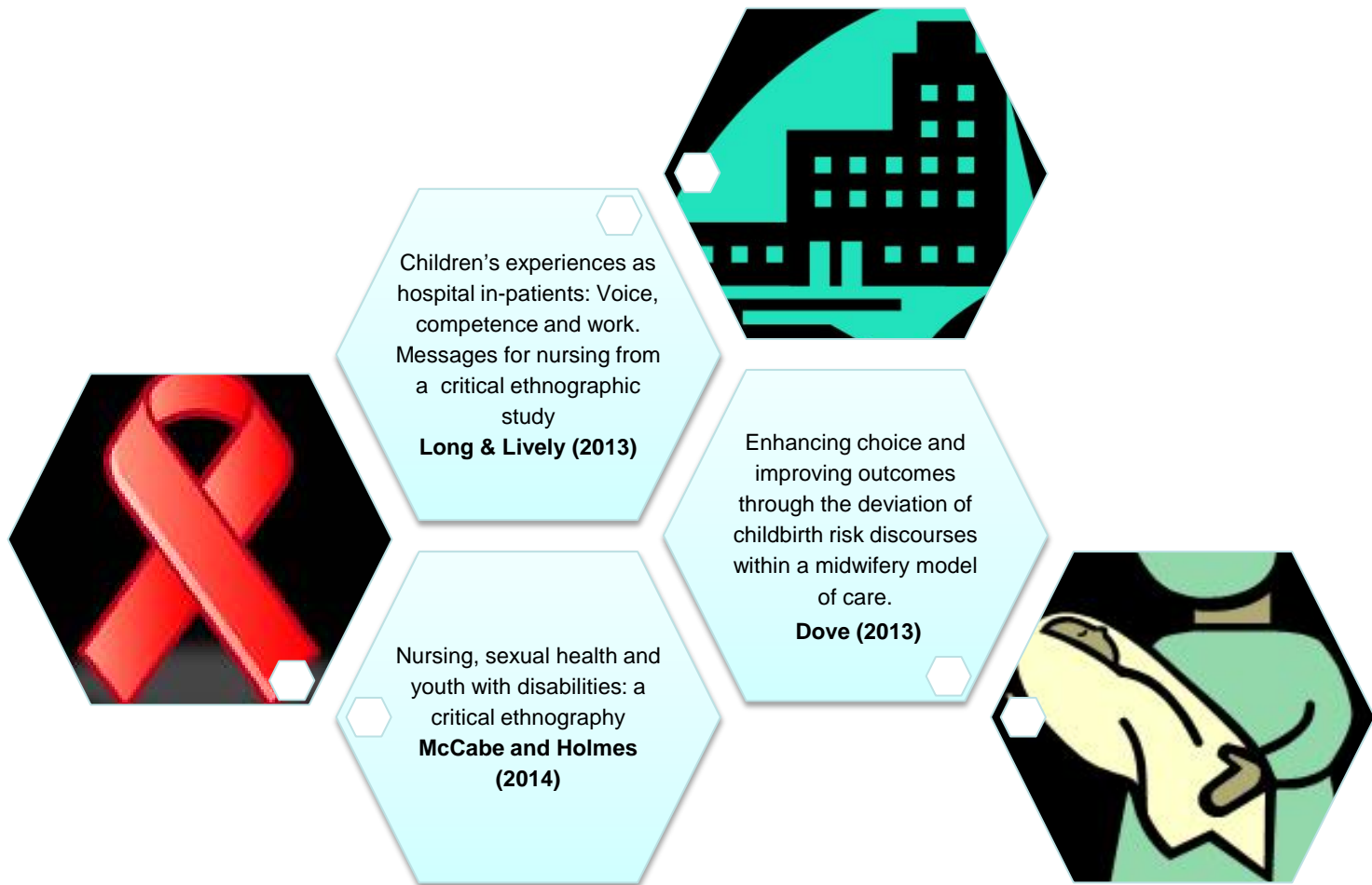
The aim is to theorize social structural constraints and human agency, as well as the interrelationship between structure and agency in order to consider paths towards empowerment of the researched.”

*Gordon et al. (2001)*

“ Critical ethnography is an approach that is overtly political and critical, exposing inequalities in an effort to effect change.”

*O'Reilly( 2009 p. 51)*

# Critical Ethnography Examples



# **Auto-ethnography**

Autoethnography is *“a form of self-narrative that places the self within a social context”*.  
Reed-Danahay (1997)

“The auto-ethnography brings the author firmly into the text with a heightened self-consciousness [reflexivity] of the textual production.”

Plummer (2001) p.398

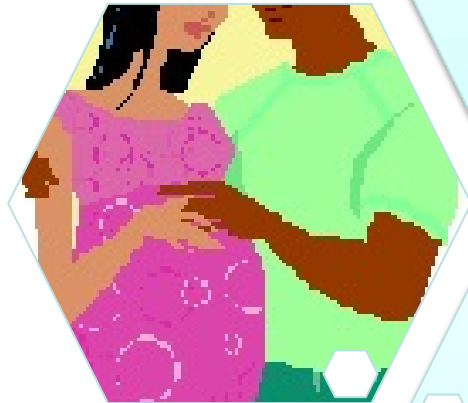
“At its most basic this refers to self-centred ethnographic writing, in which the central narrative threads are the selves of researchers and/or researched....

[Autoethnography] involves more personal attention being paid to a) why a research topic is chosen in the first place, b) how it gains and takes shape through the research process and c) how researchers, and researched and readers can all become involved in the process of interpreting its findings.”

Crang and Crook (2007)



# Auto-Ethnography Examples



Birth Injury, Disabling  
Families and Enabling  
Human Factors

**Benson, D.V. (2014)**  
*Unpublished Thesis*



Autoethnography: a  
method of research and  
teaching for transformative  
education.

**Belbase, Luitel, and  
Taylor(2008)**

Selling your soul to the  
devil: an autoethnography  
of pain, pleasure and the  
quest for a child.

**Neville-Jan (2004)**



# Participatory Ethnography

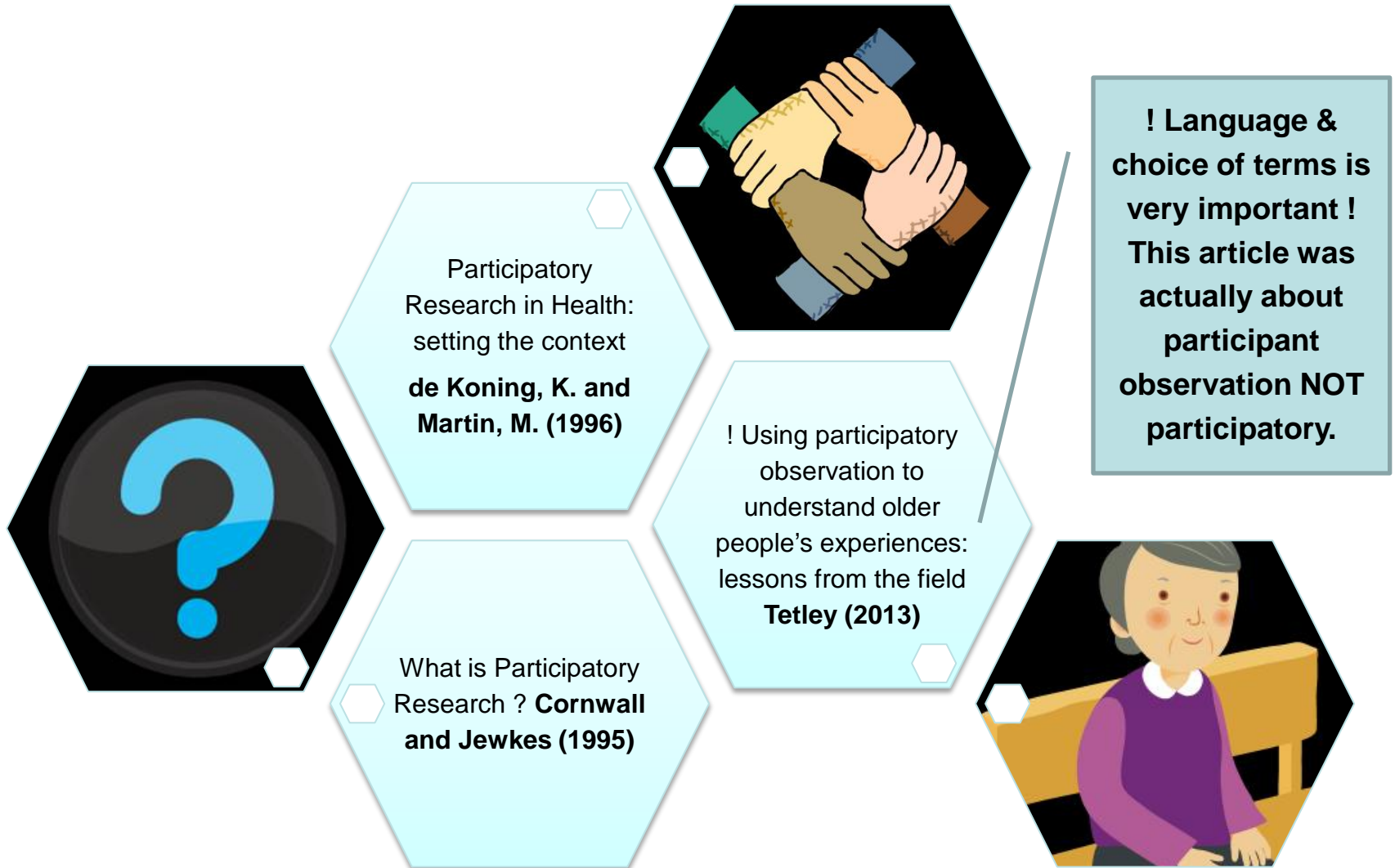
Participatory Research =

“Rather than passive ‘informants’ or ‘subjects’, research participants are now often encouraged to take an active part in the research process, empowered where possible to contribute, direct, redirect, and guide the research in ways that ensure their own perspective is given due weight.”  
O’Reilly (2009 p.59)

In participant ethnography “researcher and participants jointly define certain aspects of the research design, discuss the findings, and sometimes write the final report together.”  
Gobo (2008 p.146)

In its simplest terms, participatory ethnography involves participants in the research process.

# Participatory Ethnography Examples



# **Summary** O'Reilly (2009 p.3)

- Ethnography is a methodology – a theory, or set of ideas – about research that rests on a number of fundamental criteria. Ethnography is iterative-inductive research; that is to say it evolves in design through the study.
- Ethnography draws on a family of methods, involving direct and sustained contact with human agents, within the context of their daily lives (and cultures), watching what happens, listening to what is said, and asking questions.
- It results in richly written accounts that respect the irreducibility of human experience, acknowledges the role of theory, as well as the researcher's own role, and view humans as part object/ part subject.

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